

Postal Regulatory Commission

Washington, D.C. 20268-0001

NOTICE OF FILING UNDER 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)

TO THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE:

Please take notice that the Commission received two petitions for review of the Postal Service's determination to close the Home post office located in Home, Kansas. The first petition for review received November 16, 2011, was filed by Pat and Jim Schramm. The second petition for review received November 29, 2011, was filed by Kenneth and Carol Koch. The earliest postmark date is November 9, 2011.

This notice is advisory only and is being furnished so that the Postal Service may begin assembling the administrative record in advance of any formal appeal proceedings held upon the alleged (closing/consolidation) for transmittal pursuant to 39 CFR § 3001.113(a) (requiring the filing of the record within 15 days of the filing with the Commission of a petition for review).



Shoshana M. Grove
Secretary

Date: December 1, 2011

Attachment

November 9, 2011

A 2012-72
RECEIVED

To Whom It May Concern:

2011 NOV 16 P 2:39

We originally replied to your proposal to close our post office here in Home, Kansas on August 16, 2011. At that time we pointed out some mistakes in your docket. Since we are now in the final appeal process, we believe it is time to once again plead our case and point out areas with errors, as no attempt has been made to correct these errors.

The most glaring error that you refuse to recognize involves what this office costs to operate. You insist that our postmaster (OIC) receives \$15,350 per annum in salary and an additional \$5,142 per annum in fringe benefits. While we trust the lady who runs our post office would gladly accept these amounts, she actually receives \$11.98 per hour along with no fringe benefits. Since this office is open only 20 hours per week (no Saturday service thank you), the total outlay for personnel here is less than \$12,000, (holidays x 4 hours x no pay), not the \$20,492 you keep insisting on.

The final and perhaps the most important consideration for an appeal concerning the closing the Home, Kansas post office involves the conducting of your "proposed discontinuance" meeting here on April 7, 2011. This meeting was conducted by Ron Reilly, postmaster at Columbus, Nebraska, and Dorothy Bryan, postmaster at Auburn, Kansas. In your handbook PO-101, Section 253, you state that community meetings are to be held by a District Manager or Manager of Post Office Operations. The handbook does not state that anyone else should be conducting these meetings. Since we did not have the proper representation at our meeting, we think an appeal is in order and we hope you will give us the meeting we deserve with the proper personnel in attendance.

Received

NOV 14 2011

Office of PAGR

Thank you for your time.

Pat and Jim Schramm
Lewis Seed and Fertilizer
208 2nd Street
Home, Ks 66438

August 16, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

The following is an appeal to keep the Home, Kansas Post Office open. We received the official docket to notify this community of your decision to close the Post Office. There are several errors in the docket.

1. The Home Post Office does not have a Postmaster. We have an O.I.C. Therefore the salary outlay is not \$15,350. She is an hourly employee and she does NOT receive benefits...both are errors in the docket. Total cost for the office would be less than \$20,000.
2. The docket states the Postmaster retired in 2001. That is also an error. The last Postmaster was Frank Peterson, and he retired in 1989.
3. The docket states the Marysville Post Office has window service all day long, when they are actually closed from 11 a.m. to Noon...not convenient for someone who has a lunch hour at that time.
4. Stated in the docket is that the Home Post Office is not handicap accessible. If you view the photos of the Post Office in the docket you can clearly see the handicap ramp...the Post Office is indeed handicap accessible.
5. The revenue is not stated. Blue Valley Telecommunications, one of our many local businesses, sends out 6,000 statements a month to their customers...along with advertising flyers, and a newsletter at least ten times each year, in addition to a yearly report sent to each customer. Another business, Fisher Rock, mail all of their rock sales through our Post Office. Home City Grain, and Lewis Seed and Fertilizer, also send out monthly statements. The revenue at our Post Office is over \$50,000 each year. Our Post Office definitely has revenue.
6. The docket contains patron questionnaires from other communities. We thought this was a docket exclusively for Home, Kansas...

We attended three area meetings concerning the closing of local Post Offices. Each time we were told the Postal Department could not stop Saturday service/delivery. We have not had Saturday service for many years and we have adjusted. At all three meetings we were told the route delivery person could handle all service requests. If that in fact is correct...fine...then close all Post Offices nationwide...let everyone adjust...not just us in the small communities. Let the route people handle everything. We can tell you right now the route union will be up in arms. All the extra work would result in extra pay and more employees. Also, there would be

the expense of schooling for the route people so that they would be capable of handling all services.

When the Postal Department took the box service out of our Post Office, they took revenue away from us. When they moved our local delivery from Home to Marysville, they took revenue from us then, as the money now goes to Marysville. The Postal Department has continued to chip away at our community hoping to have a reason for closure. Our community is growing. Since last April, another new home has been built, and two families have moved to our community, adding ten more people to our population. Our town may be small, but we are not by any means dying. Yes, the Postal Department is in trouble. However, by closing our Post Office and other offices nationwide, the savings would be less than 1% of the department budget. Looking at the overall picture, if you would eliminate Saturday service/delivery, it would save money across the country. My point is, why do the small communities in the Heartland of America have to be the ones to adjust?

The Postal Department sells stamps, but how do you deliver your reports? Online. How do they pay bills? Online. The department spent millions on computers and internet to save money...looks like a case of cutting off your nose to spite your face.

The Postmaster General retired with how much of a bonus? Quite noble. We think he should have turned his salary and his bonus back into the department. He can't be blamed for bailing out of such a mess.

Taking all available information into consideration, we think the department is wrong to close the Home, Kansas Post Office. It would be to your advantage to leave it open, reinstall the local boxes and move the route origin back to our town. We are a thriving community, and would like to be recognized for what we really are...not just another place to make a budget cut.

Thank you for your time.

Pat and Jim Schramm
Lewis Seed and Fertilizer
208 2nd Street
Home, Ks 66438

On April 7, 2011 we were told that our beloved Home Post Office was under review and had a very slim chance of surviving.

Yes, we would like to hear that our rural route would originate again in Home. That route carrier was removed to Marysville, Kansas many years ago. The stamp money and all letters are taken to Marysville. Thus giving all revenue and count to the Marysville, Kansas Post Office.

Yes, we would like to hear that the lobby boxes would be re-installed. Those were taken out 20 years ago. Boxes represent revenue and business at the window in a lobby of the Post Office. So again revenue and piece count was taken away.

Yes, we would like to hear that again we would have Saturday service; but that was also removed several years ago. Saturday is a day a lot of people don't work and they could send packages, or purchase stamps and money orders. All of these services have been taken away from us so of course the inside window revenue and piece count is down. Like it or not we have adjusted to these changes.

We are a progressive community...here are some of the facts.....

Home, Kansas population.....138

Businesses..... 14

Jobs in our community..... 148

The largest employer is Blue Valley Tele-Communications. In the last two years they have built a multi-million dollar office facility. Each month they send out at least 6,000 statements to customers. Ten times a year they mail a newsletter and once a year a yearly report to each customer. Also potential customers receive flyers advertising various specials. This company alone generates a lot of revenue as well as the other businesses and residents of this community. In the past several years our community has installed a sewer system. The volunteer fire department is in the process of building a new fire station. Also in the last few years six new home have been built in our community. These homes belong to young families.

We don't have a Postmaster, her title is OIC...therefore she does not get benefits. The Post Office has saved a lot of money over the last twenty years; we do not have Saturday service, just five days a week 8am to 12pm.

The United States Post Office has continued to pull our services so of course our lobby revenue and activity is down....look at the bottom line: we are paying our way... our revenue far out weighs the exprense. Please be fair.

We appreciate any help you can give us to keep our Post Office in our community.

Thank You.

Jim Schramm
Pat Schramm
Lewis Seed & Fertilizer, Inc.
208 Second St.
Home, Kansas 66438

A2012-72

Please add the following
information to the appeal
for keeping the Home
Post Office in service.
This re-inforces our
argument to keep our
Post Office open.

A2012-72

RECEIVED

2011 NOV 30 P 2:04

Thank you.

Jim and Pat Schramm
Lewis Seed & Fert
208 Second St
Home Kansas

66438

Received

NOV 23 2011

Office of PAGR

Post offices shouldn't be pawn in politics

If anyone doubted Thomas Frank's thesis in his book "What's the Matter with Kansas?" he or she need look no further than the current drama playing out with the U.S. Post Office.

In the best-seller, Frank made the case that Kansans frequently vote for their politicians based on social issues, particularly abortion, and the leaders they elect, once in office, tend to vote against the economic interests of the very constituents they represent.

As most know by now, the U.S. Postal Service is in financial trouble. But the reasons for its problems are quite different from popular perception.

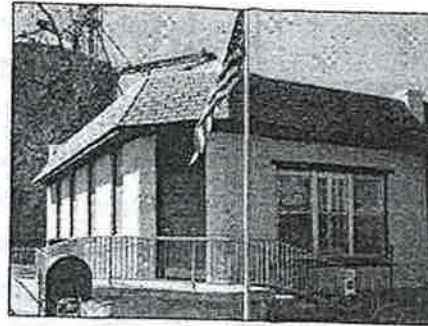
Yes, according to Regional Post Office spokesman Brian Sperry, based in Denver, postal volume has dropped 22 percent in the past five years, including a 26-percent drop in all-important First Class mail.

In response the Post Office has taken numerous measures including the streamlining of processing and closing of many facilities. A new round of closings is under consideration.

But there's a bigger boogeyman in the room. It's Congress.

In 2006 Congress passed the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA). In this bill the Postal Service was given 10 years, or until 2016, to pre-fund 75 years worth of retiree health benefits. No other government agency or business is required to do this. According to Sperry, this payment amounts to about \$5.5 billion annually.

No business in the private sector could be reasonably expected to survive under such onerous requirements. Although no



Home City Post Office is among local offices on the list for possible closure. Others are Bremen, Oketo, Barnes, Summerfield and Hollenberg. Photo by JoAnn Shum

one appears willing to say so, there clearly was a political agenda behind the passage of PAEA. It would appear that many in Congress want to entirely privatize the Postal Service.

Many make the case that, given the burdensome regulations included in PAEA, the Postal Service has been one of the best-managed entities around in the past decade. Other federal requirements have resulted in overpayments of billions into the federal civil service pension funds, which have not been refunded.

Ralph Nader, for one, argued in a recent letter to Congressman Darrell Issa, R-Calif., and Sen. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., that without such federal regulation the Post Office would actually be in the black. He uses official government statistics to make a compelling case.

Clearly the Postal Service must change and adapt with the times. But it should be treated fairly by the feds and not be used as a pawn to serve a political agenda.

Legislation has been introduced in Congress, HR 1351, which will take steps to remove these onerous rules. Only one of Kansas' four congressional representatives, Lynn Jenkins, has signed on as a co-sponsor.

A large number of Kansas towns are on lists circulating for possible post office closures. Many of them are in the First Congressional District. We've seen too many western Kansas towns lose their livelihood in recent decades. Usually the process involves the loss of a school, grocery store and finally, a post office. Some of these are the result of natural economic forces. But what's happening to the post office is being pushed by other ideological forces.

Given the current, largely artificial crisis, one would think that Congressman Tim Huelskamp would be fighting to save jobs in his district. Yet he and his office are strangely silent.

Huelskamp has unquestioned credentials on conservative social issues. Some say he concerned himself with little else while in the Kansas Legislature. He also exhibits extreme political hostility toward most endeavors of the federal government. He is the type of ideologue who would jump at the chance to privatize anything whose function could be taken off the government's hands.

The matter of whether the measure is good for the constituents of his ever-expanding congressional district is trumped by ideology. He fits neatly into the thesis of Thomas Frank.

ALAN JILKA is vice president of Jilka Furniture and former mayor of Salina.

Senate committee adopts amendment on post office closures

A post office bill amendment authored by U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kansas, to require the U.S. Postal Service to set minimum standards of service and consider alternatives to closure before closing any post office, was adopted recently by the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, according to Moran's office.

The amendment would stop the closure of any post office under consideration for closure, including those in Kansas, until the standards of service are finalized, a news release says. The bill, called the 21st Century Postal Service Act of 2011 now moves to the full Senate for consideration.

"Across Kansas and America, communities are asking, 'What do we have to do to save our post office?' But there is no answer. My amendment helps provide an answer by requiring the Postal Service to develop standards of service that must be considered as post office feasibility studies are conducted – while also preventing the closure of any post offices until those standards are in place and are considered in each case."

The Postal Service will have six months to set these standards, and the Postal Regulatory Commission must approve the final list, according to Moran. The amendment requires the Postal Service to include the following

criteria in their standards of service:

- Geography, including distance to other postal services and maximum time a customer should be expected to travel;

- Population, including density and age demographics; and

- A requirement to serve remote areas, as well as communities with transportation challenges such as inclement weather or natural geographic obstacles.

Additionally, Moran said the amendment requires the USPS to consider alternatives to closure before closing any post office, such as reducing the number of hours the post office is open or contracting to provide retail

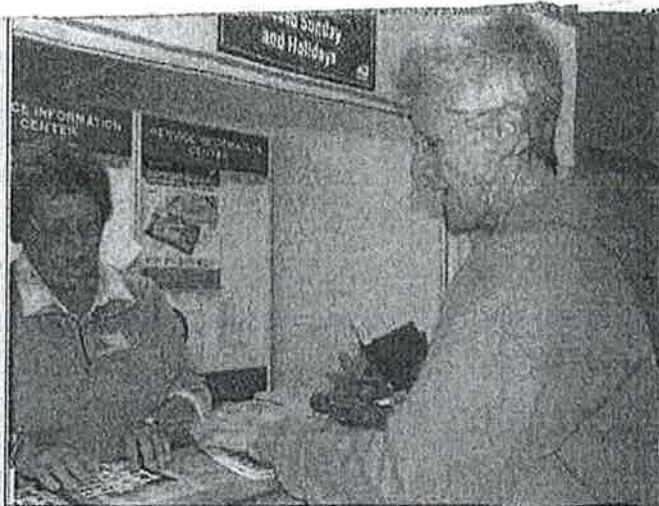
postal services in an alternative establishment such as the local hardware or grocery store.

The amendment also strengthens a community's ability to appeal to the regulatory commission if the community is still marked for closure after the standards of service are in place and the community members believe the closure decision was reached in error. Finally, the amendment requires the postal service to ensure citizens within the service area of a post office that was closed in the year prior to enactment of the 21st Century Postal Service Act of 2011 can access retail postal services in an alternative establishment such as the local grocery store.

"I am committed to making certain rural America is not forgotten," Sen. Moran said. "Because of local post offices, many small businesses can still keep their doors open in rural Kansas. And, for many senior citizens who no longer have the ability to drive long distances, it is the local post office that gives them a personal and business connection to the rest of the world."

The Postal Regulatory Commission has found that maintaining rural post offices only amounts to 0.7 percent of the postal service's budget. Therefore, reducing service to rural communities and senior citizens will have little benefit to the postal service's bottom line.

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Marci Penner, right, director of the Kansas Sampler Foundation, buys stamps from Elaine Roever at the Home City Post Office Nov. 9. Penner traveled along Kansas Highway 99 visiting nearby post offices facing possible closure. Photo by JoAnn Shum

Trip highlights rural post offices

One day. Seven post offices. \$381.56 worth of stamps. 440 miles.

"There is nothing like experiencing an issue firsthand and looking in the eyes of the people who are living the issue," said Marci Penner after her post office journey on Nov. 9, which included stops in Summerfield and Home City.

"I had been getting e-mails and phone calls from people concerned about losing their post offices," Penner said. "At some point, you can't just have these conversations and not do

POST OFFICE BILL

A post office bill amendment written by Sen. Jerry Moran of Kansas would stop closure of post offices while the Postal Service determines standards of service.

Page 1B

something about it."

Penner and WenDee LaPlant, both of the Kansas Sampler Foundation, decided to pick a road and visit all the

See POST OFFICE on Page 2

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POST OFFICE

From Page 1

towns on that highway that had post offices that are on the list for possible closing. They chose Kansas Highway 99 and several miles on either side because it had seven post offices on the list between the Oklahoma and Nebraska state lines.

The two women's plan was to visit with the postmaster and people coming in the post office and buy \$50 worth of stamps at each place, Penner wrote in a blog on the Sampler's website.

In addition to Home City and Summerfield, they visited Chautauqua and Peru in Chautauqua County, Elk Falls in Elk County, Hamilton in Greenwood County and Admire in Lyon County.

CHATAUQUA

The first stop was in Chataqua (population 98) near the Oklahoma border.

After being greeted on the sidewalk by Rudy Taylor of the Montgomery County Chronicle, one cat and two dogs, they met Emma, the postmaster, who had just finished vacuuming and was ready to start the day. After a short visit, they learned the building was originally a feed store. They also met the mayor.

ONLY IN A SMALL TOWN

"We got to Peru (population 160), and I went in to visit with David, the postmaster," Penner said. "Little did I know that after I went inside, a truck pulled up beside us and called to WenDee. It was Emma's husband. He had tracked us down. We didn't know it but Emma had thought we asked for 50 stamps so that is what she had given us. When we left, she looked at our check and saw it was for \$50.40. She called her husband to come get the rest of the stamps and find us. Only in a small town."

"At every post office, the role of community gathering spot was obvious as people would come and go," Penner said. "We learned that more than one postmaster would watch for certain people and if they didn't come in to get their mail, they

would call them to make sure they were OK. Only in a small town."

ELK FALLS

Jennifer Brummel, Elk County Economic Development director and Youth Development coordinator, met them at the Elk Falls (population 104) post office.

"When asked if the post office was going to have an entry in next weekend's Outhouse Festival, postmaster Lecia's eyes lit up," Penner said. "She told us the extremely clever name for their entry but it can't be revealed yet. (The festival is Nov. 18-19). We bought our stamps, and Jennifer ordered some for her upcoming wedding thank you cards."

An elderly local woman, who was very distraught about losing the post office, came in.

"This is my place," said the woman. "I've been coming here since I was 9. I don't want to lose it."

Before Penner and LaPlanche left town, they tracked down Steve and Jane Fry at their "secret garden" house.

"Talk about ingenious people," Penner said. "We got to see the new bunkhouse upstairs in the barn. As would be expected from Steve and Jane, they have created a cozy atmosphere with the most unique use of recycled materials, ceramics, and personal touch. The 1930s concrete elephants and sculptures in the 'garden' were standing proud and visible."

FAMILIAR FACES

At Admire, population 176, they received a warm welcome from friends Dee Reid, Ann Birney and Joyce Thier, who gave them a tour of the community center which is in the school that closed at the end of the 2010 school year. The locals are also developing a museum in the school.

"It was great to meet, Mike, the postmaster, who also made our sandwiches-to-go at the Last Chance Café," Penner said. This post office was also a feed store at one time.

Penner said the drive through Wabaunsee County was

beautiful, and they admired the stone fences along the winding roads. The hardest part of the trip was driving through towns like Sedan, Howard, Madison, Olpe, Emporia, Eskridge, Alma, Westmoreland and others and not being able to stop and see things and say hi to folks, according to Penner.

THRIVEABILITY

At Hamilton (population 309), Katherine, the postmaster, knew they were coming. Word had traveled down the road.

"While visiting about Hamilton, a local business owner came in and talked about how they choose to do business through the post office to support it but they'll find other options when the post office closes," she said. "I had to wonder if the USPS knows how much loyalty locals have had for their post office but will choose different options if the local post office closes."

Hamilton still has its school and two restaurants, a classic soda fountain and lots of ranchers and oil and gas business in the area.

"People just driving through may not always see the behind-the-scenes thrive-ability in these towns, but it's there," Penner said.

In Wamego, they did a quick drive-by the city park to see the building for the mini-train. "Bunny and Gary McCloud responded to our 'Put your stamp on it' sponsorship notice so as we drove through Wamego," Penner said. "Bunny met us in the turn lane along side K-99 across from the Wamego Telecommunications building. She gave us her warm smile and handed us a \$100 bill to help with the stamp purchases and gas."

SUMMERFIELD BIZ

"On to Summerfield (population 199) in Marshall County," Penner said. "The streets were full of cars. It looks like the community-owned grocery store continues to do well, too. And, I'm anxious to come back to see the working blacksmith shop."

"We met the postmas-



Brenda Helmerichs is the Summerfield Post Office officer in charge. Photo by JoAnn Shum

ter and bought our stamps," she said. "A local business, al-laroundthehouse.biz, does a great business and everything is sent out through the post office. I don't see how it will be possible for this entrepreneur to continue shipping through the post office if the physical post office closes. This is another chunk of revenue the USPS will likely lose."

HOME, SWEET HOME

"Our last stop of the day was at Home," Penner said. "How appropriate. Home is one of the top two thriving unincorporated cities in the state. Healy is the other. We first went over to the feed and grain store across from the post office. It's located in an old bank and is just brimming with character."

"Kansas pride oozes out of owners Jim and Pat, as does their affection for Home."

"They raved about the restaurant across the street. We had a great discussion about the post office and issues of small towns."

"We found Elaine and bought our stamps," Penner said. "It's so interesting to meet these very dedicated post office workers. Elaine also drives a school bus."

Others at the post office were JoAnn Shum from the Marysville Advocate and Emily Boeckmann from Blue Valley Tele-communications.

"This was a great prelude to our guidebook research journey that will take us to every town in the state in the next two years," Penner said. "From the Chautauqua springs to our last stop at Home, this was a day that reaffirms the fortitude and spirit of the Kansas people as well as the richness and multitude of explorer attractions in the state."

A 2012 - 12

Received

November 16, 2011

To Whom It Concerns:

OFFICE OF THE AGENT

RECEIVED

When the Home Post Office held its meeting some information was not correct. It was said that the last Postmaster to Retire was in 2001. The last one to Retire was in 1988 or 1989. At that time the boxes and rural route was removed also. That was a big mistake removing them. The post office is a gathering place for the community and people went there to keep in touch with each other and happenings in the community. They did their mailing business and also spent their money at the local businesses. Now with just an OIC there is no benefits paid and when the OIC needs to be gone it is not easy to find someone to come in and keep the office open. Do you not think that they get sick or need a day off???? There has been NO benefits paid at Home Post office since 2001. Where has all that money gone that was charged to Home?

Was told that the OIC only had about 15 minutes of retail workload a day. When the count was done, it was in the winter and slow time of year. There are a lot of Senior Citizens in our community and we do not expect them to venture out in bad weather. Also the box that is outside the office does not get counted and it takes in a lot of mail. I think that should be added to the count. The OIC may have a short window business day but I know they have plenty of other paper work that has to be sent in each day and every day is not a slow day.

The Blue Valley Telecomm people use a meter that is in another state but keeping the credit here at the Home Post Office has always been a hassle. Why does the credit go away every time it is renewed? Can't the hassle be stopped and renewed more easily so that company doesn't have to follow up each time. I don't think that is very good image of the postal service.

Were told that the rural carrier can do everything that the postmaster can do. Is their truck going to be big enough to carry all that information, cash and equipment. If not, how long and what will be expected of the customer. Are we going to have to wait for the carrier to come to give us the information we need, or make long distant phone calls. I think it will only be transferring what a carrier can do to another department and I can't see where that is saving money. Will a carrier deliver packages if they are scared of dog(S)? Sounds like the customer is going to have to do a lot of waiting or phoning to get answers.

When you said all mail had to be sent to Topeka to be sorted, how did that save money? I like to have my local office cancel the mail as Home is a different name for a town or community. The mail was put in the right box then also. The mail is still mixed up sometimes. I have lost two letters that had checks in them that have never been found. These were to pay bills so that was not a good thing.

If rural carriers are to arrive at boxes about the same time each day, how is that going to

be possible if they are doing the items you say can be done the same as a postmaster? Holding mail when you want it done will not be easy also. It would mean a long distant phone call and if you only want to do it once and it is an emergency the office does not like to do it. Sometimes it is necessary for the customers business. We had that case once and the postmaster was not nice about handling the situation. We have not needed to do it since but there may be a time that we need it. Think now they want a written card filled out but that on a last minute deal is not possible.

If the office is closed we were told that the zip code would be the same but not the town name. I don't think that is correct. As when other towns have closed the town name was used and the zip was changed. I hope we never have to lose our town name.

Why does the smaller offices need all the equipment that the bigger offices need? That is a lot of money being spent and especially now if you are planning on closing all these post offices. Seems to me that is money that could be spent more wisely .

When we had our meeting for the Home office, there was not an MPOO there. Will Home get to have another meeting since that was not legal?

Congressman Jerry Moran said that a post office could not be closed because of the amount of revenue it receives. Is this another transfer in the department so a post office could be closed.

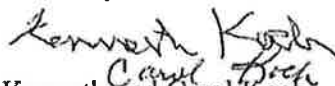
I have written to Omaha about a second letter that I wrote that is not in the appeals book in the Home office. I wrote and asked for a copy of the front page with the round dates on them and haven't received an answer. When I called them about the letters I was told they were there and that was Oct. 24. Think by now I would have receive an answer back.

The way the postal people have presented these town meetings have not been helpful. They have given no help in how the town can keep their office open and the information given has not been up to date.

These are just some of my concerns that I hope will keep our office open. I think there are ways that the postal people can keep offices open. I hope in the rural communities you will look out for the Senior citizens and keep jobs so people can be employed. Know the economy is bad but us in the rural areas are really hit with no jobs.

Keep Home Post Office Open.. The OIC do a good job and don't cost the postal people that much in the budget. We need our POST OFFICE.

Sincerely,


Kenneth and Carol Koch